



Arizona Department of Education
Research and Evaluation
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MEMORANDUM

TO: District Superintendents and Charter School Administrators

FROM: Alphonse Damas, Ph.D.
Director of Integrated Data Management
Research and Evaluation

DATE: April 28, 2006

SUBJECT: Four-year Graduation Rates for the Cohort Class of 2005: Data Verification and Statistical Appeals Process for the 2005 Cohort
(REF# RE-06004-E)

The Arizona Department of Education (ADE) is preparing to calculate the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) evaluations for fiscal year 2006. The four-year graduation rates are important complements of the AYP and used solely in the calculation of high school profiles. High School Status will be granted to any school that reported data in grades ten, eleven or twelve in at least one of the relevant school years (2001-2002, 2002-2003, 2003-2004 or 2004-2005).

As of fiscal year 2003, all Arizona public and charter schools were required to submit Year End Enrollment data to the ADE's computer tracking system, termed the Student Accountability Information System (SAIS). For five years, the ADE ran two parallel systems: the SAIS system and a separate system called the Online Graduation Rate Study Application. By 2005, it was determined that SAIS was sufficiently accurate so that the parallel system was discontinued. And as indicated in a memo released on February 28th, 2006, starting in fiscal year 2006, graduation rate data will only be collected through SAIS. **Though the data collection strategy has changed, the definition and calculation of the graduation rates will remain unchanged** (please see memo REF# RE06001-E).

Because SAIS data will be used to calculate the graduation rates, there have been several important changes to the evaluation and appeals timeline and procedure that you should be aware of. These changes as they relate specifically to the graduation rate calculation are summarized in Table 1 and described in the section below it:

Table 1: 2006 release and appeal timeline for the four-year graduation rates for the 2005 cohort for all schools:

	Opening Date*	Closing Date
Preliminary Embargoed release of four-year graduation rates	May 8, 2006	July 21, 2006
AYP statistical appeals for the four-year graduation rates	May 8, 2006	June 29, 2006
* viewable via the Common Logon; N/A=Not Applicable		

There are five immediate changes to the evaluation and appeals timeline and procedures administrators should be aware of:

1. **The graduation rates will be released to districts/charter schools on May 8, 2006 via the ADE Common Logon; however, the data will be embargoed until the public release.** If you are unable to access the Common Logon, please contact your district Superintendent in order to have the application added; for technical assistance, please contact the ADE Support Center at 602-542-7378; 866-577-9636 or E-mail enterprise@ade.az.gov.
2. **There will be a separate process for data correction and statistical appeals processes of four-year graduation rates.** The window for data correction and statistical appeals process for the four-year graduation rate for AYP will be open at a separate, earlier time than appeals for other parts of the formula. Substantive appeals for the graduation rates will be considered during the regular appeals window (see memo REF# RE-06003-E). A separate memo will be released describing the data correction and statistical appeals processes for the five-year graduation and dropout rates for AZ LEARNS.
3. **Administrators can request a copy of the data used to calculate the 2005 four-year graduation rates starting May 8, 2006.** The ADE will supply this information in text (ASCII) format. Please send all requests to gradrate@ade.az.gov.
4. **Administrators can verify the following information for each school expected to receive a graduation rate:**
 - School had SAIS data for grade 10, 11 or 12 in at least one of the following fiscal years: 2002, 2003, 2004 or 2005
 - Correct 2005 cohort membership total
 - Correct students comprising the 2005 cohort membership total based on SAISID
 - Correct 2005 cohort graduation total
 - Correct student-graduates comprising the 2005 cohort membership total based on SAISID
 - Correct student subgroup designation for gender, ethnicity/race, SPED, ELL, free/reduced lunch, and migrant

The ADE will only accept verified graduation rate information about each school on a text file with the exact data structure as the one provided by the ADE. Please send all verification files as an attachment to gradrate@ade.az.gov. A document detailing the procedure for submitting verified graduation rate information to the ADE will be available via the Common Logon. Once accepted, the ADE will produce a graduation rate for these schools based on this information.

5. **Please be aware that districts and charter holders are solely responsible for verifying information for their schools.** The statistical appeals process for the four-year graduation rate will be available until 5:00 PM, Friday, June 30, 2006; no further submissions will be accepted after the deadline. To ensure completion, we recommend that schools verify data prior to the deadline date, Friday, June 30, 2006, to avoid difficulties or delays. Please note that any district /charter school that fails to complete the data verification process as described above will forfeit the right to make a statistical appeal for their four-year graduation rate for AYP.

If you have any questions about the data verification process, please send an e-mail to gradrate@ade.az.gov or call 602-542-5151. Be sure to include the following with each correspondence to the ADE: school/district name, school/district CTDS and Entity ID, your name, email address, and phone number.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Alphonse Damas, Ph.D.
Director of Integrated Data Management

Questions or Concerns

If you have any questions or concerns, please email them to gradrate@ade.az.gov